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Recent
Some Characteristic Features of Bolshevik Tactics Against Emigrants

The campaign to induce political emigrants to return to the Fatherland began on a large scale immediately after Stalin's death. Special publications of the Latvian Communist Party, special transmitters and agents were provided for this task. However, during the last few years a new, characteristic move in Communist tactics has been observed, i.e. playing members of families in occupied Latvia against family members in the free world, especially against those who are definitely engaged in anti-Communist activities in the West. Attempts are made to force the latter, either by threatening that repressive measures may be used against their family members in Latvia, or by offers of money so that these elements, undesirable to the Soviet system, would cease their anti-Communist activities, or else would become agents on behalf of the Soviet Union.

The picture outlined below briefly describes the methods used by Bolshevik agents in Stockholm in October 1959, when 8 Latvians visited this city. The excursion group from Riga also included the political leader A. Lauris. First of all, a telephone call was received at A.'s apartment from the Malmen Hotel. The message was: "Greetings to you from Vaskis." A. remembered Vaskis well; the latter was a former "politruk" (political instructor), with whom he had already had a meeting in the above mentioned matter. Now A. Lauris had taken over the functions of Vaskis. It seems that they both come from the same Soviet agent-training unit in Riga. During the telephone conversation, greetings were also transmitted

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from a brother in occupied Latvia and the desire for a meeting was expressed, so that a package could be handed over. (The package contained a series of Riga postcards and a bottle of vodka). A meeting was arranged for 2000 hours near the City Hall; after that the conversation was continued in the "Gondol" restaurant.

V. Lauris (it has not been proved whether this is his true name) is about 35 years old, average build, black hair, broad face, speaks with a slight Latgale accent. He introduced himself as a higher party official. He is said to have traveled much throughout Europe, and knows some English. However, his judgments in all matters are conventional, following the party directives. His job, according to his own statements, is to convince A. that he should cease his anti-Communist activities and join the cause of the builders of Communism. "Come and help us build Communism," is the leitmotiv of his conversations. Since Lauris is well informed on everything that Vaskis told him about his arguments with A., his questions are brief and to the point:

- L. Leave the Latvian National Fund in Stockholm -- you are the principal person there. The activity of the Fund spreads slander about the life of the Soviet people. Let us build Communism. We already have great achievement in all fields, and they will be even greater.
- A. I am not the principal person in the Fund. Even if I leave, the Fund will continue to work as before, as it is a large global organization with 33 council members and representatives in all continents.

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- L. Then remain in the Fund and sabotage its work. We shall pay you a considerable monthly salary. (How much, he did not say).
- A. Money does not interest me. I am well situated. I work in this organization because I am convinced that I can help the Latvian people with this work and bring them relief by informing the world about the Communist terror, deportations, etc. That is the way I build Communism."
- L. There are no more deportations. They were only during Stalin's time. There are no more slave labor camps and deportation camps either.
- A. That cannot be true. We ourselves have been sending relief packages quite recently to Vorkuta, Kolyma, Inta, and other places. We also correspond with the deportees, as far as the censors permit. There is no point in arguing about that.
- L. I haven't heard anything about it. All the deportees have returned -- almost all.
- A. The dead do not return, and my friends will not return either.
- L. Does the Fund give information to the Americans?
- A. On the contrary. The Americans are better informed about conditions behind the Iron Curtain. We take information from them, from newspapers, news bulletins, etc.

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- L. Then you give information to the Swedish Staff?
- A. They are not interested either in what we read in the Soviet press and magazines.
- L. But your Fund is supposed to have a restricted (secret) section? The newspapers wrote about it.
- A. There is no such thing. The Fund itself is a restricted organization. I shall send you all the Fund's publications in English and other languages, which describe the fate of the Latvian people. As to whether it is true -- let us have your counter-arguments in the press. Do not be afraid of our free speech, as we are not afraid of you reading material.
- L. I shall accept your books. You personally as a poet write in a manner which is not acceptable for Communists. You have made an error -- come back to your people.
- A. Our philosophies of life (Weltanschauung) do not coincide. Dialectical materialism does not interest me. I shall not be able to help you build Communism. Let us agree to do everything possible to help the Latvian people to live.
- L. That must be done. Come over to our side, and perform the part of an observer-informer on everything taking place in the life of Latvians

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in Sweden which would harm Communism. You will have enough money -- we'll give it to you. (Heatedly)

A. I am not crazy or mercenary, and I am not a foolish boy. I am getting on in years and am not changeable. Speak to the Auseklis people.

L. But the Latvians all around you are spying, for example Silins, who has contacts with the Soviet Embassy.

A. That is probably a provocation; however, you who have contacts with the Soviet Embassy should know more about that.

L. We are followed by the Swedish police here in Stockholm.

A. Pure imagination. Nobody follows you. If you start spying, then they will. There is no Cheka here.

L. At least come and visit us in Soviet Latvia for a few days, then you will get a different impression of our life. You will change your opinion.

A. That is too expensive for me. And the things I should like to see, you would not show me. Better let my brother come and visit me in Stockholm.

L. That could be done. (Grows thoughtful)

However, wouldn't you like to meet me again, or somebody else from the Party, in Copenhagen, in February 1960?

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A. Will my brother come? What shall I do with strangers?

L. We'll think about it -- I can't promise.

A. Let us see what the results will be of our closed discussions, with you and Vaskis. How will you treat my brother in Latvia?

L. He is doing all right, he is a forestry instructor.

In the further course of the conversation he mentioned the removal from office of several Soviet Latvian high party officials -- Berklaivs, Pinksis, and others -- who were guilty of chauvinist aspirations and other tendencies opposing the Moscow party line, as for example national communism. Lauris' standpoint is that the friendship of peoples must be strengthened first, above all nationalist aspirations; and that the over-all economic plans of the Soviet Union come in first place, not those of local republics. "Let us not hate the Russians," he says.

Lauris is also very much interested in who will take K. Zarins' place in the London Embassy, since Zarins may be expected to die soon. A. points out that only the British government circles would be informed in such matters, and not political refugees.

Lauris also does not like the name of J. Breiksis (he is said to be in his dotage), B. Kalnins, K. Lobe, V. Janums, and A. Silde. However, he shows great interest in the latter, i.e. how to silence his activities. A. resigns [?]: -- No success, comrade Lauris.

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In speaking of living conditions in occupied Latvia, Lauris admits the epidemic of hooliganism and crime, which is spreading like a plague. All decent citizens are said to be fighting it. He also admits the shortage of consumer goods, but adds: one cannot develop heavy industry as the economic foundation of the Soviet Union and at the same time walk around in expensive fabrics, etc. There is no shortage of food anywhere and the mailing of packages is now quite unnecessary. During Stalin's period, it is true, there was sometimes a shortage even of rye bread.

At the close of the conversation: Do you want a new war -- all the emigrants and Adenauer?

A. No one wants that, but they hope that the Soviet people themselves will be able to change their life, so that they could say: "We are free people!" -- The conversation in the restaurant terminated about 2300 hours.

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